

To: The Honorable Robert F. Rossiter Jr.

Your Honor,

I apologize for having to make your acquaintance this way. This really is not how I imagined meeting a Federal Judge, and it's certainly not how I planned my life turning out.

Although I sympathized and always have been compassionate regarding addiction, I didn't truly know and comprehend what it means to be an addict until I became addicted to opiates. One would think after wasting thousands of dollars and suffering a solid dozen times the initial pain of withdrawal including fevers, chills, nausea, cramping, muscle spasms, racing heart beat, and the bizarre feeling of a 250 pound jaguar trapped in your body desperately thrashing to get out I'd have realized I was sick and needed help. Sadly, I was driven to find less expensive means to feed the need, and even exploited my husband's genius to do so.

I used opiates to mask the crippling insecurity that comes from years of unresolved emotional pain. While I know that not everyone who loses a mother as a preschooler has become an addict, most don't also then have the misfortune to deal with a negligent father, a physically & emotionally abusive adoptive mother, sexual assault, complete lack of contact with their deceased mother's family, (as per the adoptive mother's orders) a learning disability that went undiagnosed, a physical disability which gravely affected self-esteem, the violent & unnecessary death of a sibling, an utterly tragic & brutally painful divorce, and many more graphic traumas too extensive to list here.

And when I finally found something to numb all that pain, I was hooked.

Unfortunately, my addiction has led to your courtroom and

the place I am at today: writing to you on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, trying to explain succinctly that I am extremely sorrowful about my behavior & deeply regret my actions.

I am actually relieved I was arrested. I was worn out, scared of the people I worked for, and even more frightened of having to go through the physical and mental anguish of withdrawal. I felt as trapped by the social & economic pressure as I did by the addiction. I genuinely felt I couldn't live comfortably without opiates or some substitute such as methadone or suboxone. After weeks of nausea, cramping, chills, fever, paranoid thoughts, burning joint pain, fitful sleep, sincere terror that this would never end, and ravishing hunger combined with the inability to keep anything down, I still remember the day I woke up and finally felt good. Not just no longer sick, but rested. Peaceful. Comfortable. Despite the fact I was on a cement jailhouse floor, it was the closest to "normal" I'd felt since I started using heroin in June 2014. I'm so glad I was locked up and forced to find out I was wrong, forced to go through withdrawal to the end, and find physical peace again.

Once I started feeling better, I began taking classes. I learned about some of the reasons I react the way I do (and how to react better) from the trauma counsellors and trauma classes here. I went to, and participated in, various 12 step meetings. Eventually, I became a medical trustee. My job is to clean up after people in the medical & mental health units here at Douglas County corrections. Many of these inmates are suffering from serious mental issues exacerbated by substance abuse, or are in withdrawal and physically ill from those symptoms just as I was when I first got here. This has been a very humbling (and healing) experience for me. While many are revolted by the more graphic details of my job, I consider there to be no greater means of restitution and would happily serve the rest of my sentence in such a position if afforded the opportunity.

Regretfully, that doesn't change the fact I made some horrible choices that landed me here in the first place. I've met people here in jail whose addictions were prolonged by the product I sold. The fact I contributed to their misery makes me feel very ashamed. I don't even want to do that again.

That's not the only misery I contributed to. Thanks to my own selfishness, and cowardice, I've placed my children in the same position I was in so many years ago. It is a sad fact my youngest two, who are only 7 and 9 years old, will be most affected by the absence of their mother. I'll see them again, but they won't have me as an active and present parent. By the time I can have any meaningful role in their lives again, they will be grown men. I can't express how painful it is to realize I did this to them. I know they are in good, safe hands. But there is no replacing one's mother. Being a mother was always the one thing I could point to, and feel confident about. I took great pride in being not just a competent mother, but a pretty great one. Alas, pride goeth before a fall.

Prior to my opiate addiction, I was a functional (and loved) member of society. I was productive, holding volunteer positions in the local community. I worked establishing businesses and not for profit organizations. My elder two children were raised to adulthood successfully, and I was never in trouble with the law. I'd like to go back to being that woman, but this time I need more skills to deal when adversity & challenges arise in my life. Please recommend me for the Residential Drug & Alcohol Treatment program (RDAP). I really do not ever want to be in this position again. Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Wendie Horlitzman